



# WEST HARTFORD WOLVES NEWSLETTER

[www.westhartfordhockey.com](http://www.westhartfordhockey.com)



Artwork by Jim Fenzel

## PRACTICES START SUN, SEPT 8TH!

Please refer to your team schedule on the [Wolves website](http://Wolves website) and download the [CrossBar App](#) to see the latest details.



## LEARN TO PLAY | MITE DEV | HOUSE REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN

All three programs are for kids 8 and under and teach the basic skills for beginner hockey players. Sign up and let your friends know!

## LOOKING FORWARD, LOOKING BACK ...

Fall is almost upon us, and the West Hartford Youth Hockey Association embarks on the upcoming season with great expectations once again, after multiple Wolves teams enjoyed successful postseason runs in 2023-24, culminating in three state titles. The Wolves' Pee Wee A1 team captured the Tier 4 Lyman Diamond Division title at Northford in March, beating a previously undefeated Wonderland team 6-1 in the final. The PeeWee B team captured its tournament title in thrilling fashion, scoring the game-winning goal with three seconds left to defeat Darien in the championship game. And the Bantam A team brought home the Tier 4 title on Feb. 26 with a thrilling 3-2 victory over a tough Greater New Haven team. Congratulations once again to all of our defending champions!



## A CONVERSATION WITH RUSS TRENT ON VOLUNTEERING

Having the requisite number of volunteers to support our youth hockey teams is critical to our success as an organization and in maximizing the experience for our young athletes. We caught up with Russ Trent, WHYHA's 8U development director, to discuss the importance of volunteering. Russ has been affiliated with our program since 2010 as both a coach and board member, serving on the tryout committee, the executive board and as secretary for five-plus years. His wife, Jenn Trent, also served on the board and was our organization's scheduler for many years.

Jenn and Russ' children played for the Wolves for several years and are now in college. Their daughter Jordyn is a senior at CCSU studying cybersecurity and helps Russ coach the development program. She skated with the girls program in West Hartford, the Capital Wolves, the Northern Lights and the Conard/Hall high school team. Their son Nolan is a freshman at Sacred Heart University studying nursing. He will be trying out for its club hockey program this fall. He played in West Hartford all of his career from LTS to U18 midget, and was a captain of the Conard hockey team that won the state tournament last season.

As a member of our organization for many years, Russ knows the value volunteering has in running a good hockey program. He shared with us some insights for those parents who may be interested in volunteering:

Q: What kinds of volunteering roles are available to parents with West Hartford Youth Hockey?

A: We need coaches – head coaches and assistants. We need managers to run the scoreboard, fill out and submit scoresheets, schedule refs, and coordinate team activities. We need schedulers to schedule games and tournaments. At the development level we need parents to help on and off the ice, with on-ice coaching and off-ice coordinating (taking pictures, playing music at games, running the scoreboard and timers and verifying sign-ups and rosters, among other things).

Q: Is there any specific role that is most important in supporting our kids' hockey teams?

A: All roles are important: the coach, assistant coach, manager and scheduler roles working together and communicating are all critical to coordinating a successful season.

Q: Which roles are the most difficult to fill?

A: Getting people to commit to on-ice help for the development programs can be a struggle as most are new to the sport and many have limited skating and hockey experience. Those with limited experience may think they have limited value, which is not true.



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Q: How many volunteers are needed on a team to ensure my child has the best possible experience playing hockey?

A: For most travel teams, a coach, an assistant coach and a manager are a minimum requirement. For Development and Learn to Skate, we like to have six-plus coaches on the ice for the development side and four to six for Learn to Skate. It's especially challenging with Learn to Skate, because initially, we may require several one-on-one coaching with players who have no skating experience. For Development, we run up to six stations and need at least one coach at each station.

Q: What level of ability is required for me to volunteer as an assistant coach?

A: An ability to skate at a reasonable proficiency. You don't need to be a superstar to be an assistant coach.

Q: What kinds of skills do I need to volunteer in some other capacity?

A: Off-ice volunteers require no hockey skills or knowledge.

Q: If I decide to volunteer, how much of my time will I need to invest in this?

A: For on ice travel, it's typically four sessions a week, one hour per session, plus travel and locker room time – so maybe six to eight hours a week. For Learn to Skate and Development, it's two to three hours per week, and for House, four to five hours per week.

Q: What is the greatest challenge in finding volunteers?

A: Finding people willing to commit and then regularly showing up. For many of these kids, especially at the US level, this is their first introduction to organized hockey, and we take a lot of pride in how we guide these kids through their development – not only as hockey players, but as individuals. To do that effectively, it takes a lot of time and resources, and the more volunteers we have pitching in, the better the experience will be for these kids, and the greater the chance they will continue to pursue this sport we all love. Whatever time commitment you're willing to devote to the program, it is all very much appreciated. It all counts toward making this the best experience possible for the kids.





## OTHER PRESEASON NEWS

The Bantam A team has been preparing for its upcoming season with meetings on Saturday mornings at Fernridge Park for dryland practice. Several of the Bantam A players have been playing together in a hockey clinic on Monday nights throughout the summer months, and most of the Bantam A players have been meeting up with each other on Friday nights for drop-in hockey at Vets throughout the summer.

Many Wolves players on our Bantam B, Midget, Pee Wee and Squirt teams have also stayed sharp this summer by participating in scrimmages on Sunday nights at Newington Arena throughout the Summer.



Wolves at IPH Camp this Summer.



And Bantam B players at their preseason get-together at Walcott Park, where the kids ran some dry-land drills, played some fun games (including the longest two-hand touch football game ever recorded) and enjoyed some burgers, dogs and cake, courtesy of Coach Mike and Coach Scott.

Bantam B players: Wyatt Bandoni, Frank Campiti, Evan Gazda, Michael Killilea, Dylan Mann, Joseph Marcucci, Braden McCabe, Caleb Miliard, Eamonn Minze, Cole Moss, Ethan Rapacky, Brendan Rich, Nathan Sankar, Bradley Sechko, Arda Senecal and Johnny Wilmes.



Squirt A at a preseason get together



Send any stories, news or photos you'd like to share with us to [apierandri@gmail.com](mailto:apierandri@gmail.com)